



TO . BE . OF . USE

Om The people I love the best
jump into work headfirst
without dallying in the shallows
and swim off with sure strokes almost out of sight.
They seem to become natives of that element,
the black sleek heads of seals
bouncing like half-submerged balls.

I love people who harness themselves, an ox to a heavy cart,
who pull like water buffalo, with massive patience
who strain in the mud and the muck to move things forward,
who do what has to be done, again and again.

I want to be with people who submerge
in the task, who go into the fields to harvest
and work in a row and pass the bags along,
who stand in the line and haul in their places,
who are not parlor generals and field deserters.
but move in a common rhythm
when the food comes in or the fire to be put out.

The work of the world is as common as mud.
Botched it smears the hands, crumbles to dust.
But the thing worth doing well done
has a shape that satisfies, clean and evident.

Greek amphoras for wine or oil,

Hopi vases that held corn, are put in museums
but you know they were made to be used.

The pitcher cries for water to carry
and a person for work that is real. ||